The City of Numbered Days

By Francis Lynde

SYNOPSIS.

—4—

Brouillard, chief engineer of the Niquola irrigation dam, goes out from camp to investigate a strange light and finds an automobile party camped at the canyon portal. He meets J. Wesley Cortwright and his daughter, Genevieve, of the auto party and explains the reclamation work to them. Cortwright sees in the project a big chance to make money. Brouillard is impervious to hints from the financier, who tells Genevieve that the engineer "Will come down and hook himself if the bait is well covered." Cortwright organizes a company and obtains government contracts to furnish power and material for the dam construction. A busy city springs up about the site. Steve Massingale threatens to start a gold rush if Brouillard does not influence President Ford to build a railroad branch to the place, thus opening an easy market for the ore from the "Little Susan" mine. Brouillard and the company's promoter clash.

If you were in love with a girl and a beast of a man, who had the power to get you fired from your job, made a smirking remark about her to you, would you smash him in the jaw and kick him out of your office—even if the act caused an indefinite postponement of your wedding?

CHAPTER V—Continued.

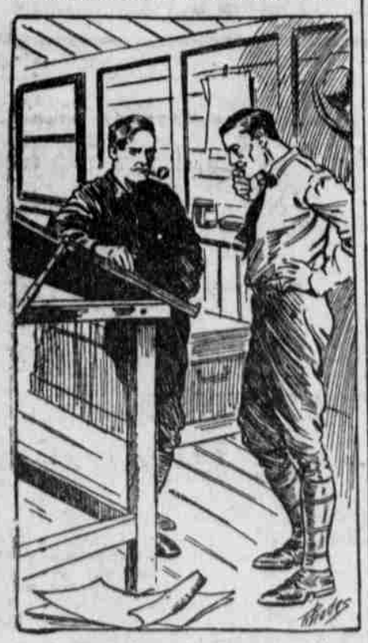
"I can't believe it, Murray. It's a leaf out of the book of Bedlam! Take a fair shot at it and see where the bullet lands: this entire crazy fake is built upon one solitary, lonesome fact—the fact that we're here, with a job on our hands big enough to create an active, present-moment market for labor and material. There is absolutely nothing else behind the bubble blowing; if we were not here the Niquola Improvement company would never have been heard of!"

Grislow laughed. "Your arguing that twice two makes four doesn't change the iridescent hue of the bubble," he volunteered. "If big money has seen a chance to skin somebody, the mere fact that the end of the world is due to come along down the pike some day isn't going to cut any obstructing figure. We'll all be buying and selling corner lots in Hosford's new city before we're a month older. Don't you believe it?"

"I'll believe it when I see it," was Brouillard's reply; and with this the matter rested for the moment.

It was later in the day, an hour or so after the serving of the hearty supper in the engineers' mess tent, that Brouillard was given to see another and still less tolerable side of his temporary guest. Hosford had come into the office to plant himself solidly in the makeshift easy chair for the smoking of a big, black after-supper cigar.

"I've been looking over your rules and regulations, Brouillard," he began, after an interval of silence which Brouillard had been careful not to break. "You're making a capital mistake in trying to transplant the old Connecticut blue laws out here. Your workingmen ought to have the right to



"I Can't Believe It, Murray. It's a Leaf Out of the Book of Bedlam!"

spend their money in any way that suits 'em."

Brouillard was pointedly occupying himself at his desk, but he looked up long enough to say: "Whisky, you mean?"

"That and other things. They tell me you don't allow any open gambling or any women here outside of the families of the workmen."

"We don't," was the short rejoinder.

"That won't hold water after we get things fairly in motion."

"It will have to hold water as far as we are concerned, if I have to build a stockade around the camp," snapped Brouillard.

Hosford's heavy face wrinkled itself in a mirthless smile. "You're nutty," he remarked. "When I find a man bearing down hard on all the little vices, it always makes me wonder what's the name of the corking big one he is trying to cover up."

Since there was obviously no peaceful reply to be made to this, Brouillard bent lower over his work and said nothing. At every fresh step in the forced acquaintance the newcomer was painstakingly developing new antagonisms. Sooner or later, Brouillard knew, it would come to an open rupture, but he was hoping that the actual hostilities could be postponed until after Hosford had worn out his temporary welcome as a guest in the engineers' mess.

For a time the big man in the easy chair smoked on in silence. Then he began again:

"Say, Brouillard, I saw one little girl today that didn't belong to your workmen's-family outfit, and she's a peach; came riding down the trail with her brother from that mine up on the south mountain—Massingale, isn't it? By Jove! she fairly made my mouth water!"

Inasmuch as no man can read field-notes when the page has suddenly become a red blur, Brouillard looked up.

"You are my guest, in a way, Mr. Hosford; for that reason I can't very well tell you what I think of you." So much he was able to say quietly. Then the control mechanism burned out in a flash of fiery rage and he cursed the guest fluently and comprehensively, winding up with a crude and savage threat of dismemberment if he should ever venture so much as to name Miss Massingale again in the threatener's hearing.

Hosford sat up slowly, and his big face turned darkly red.

"Well!" he broke out. "So you're that kind of a fire-eater, are you? I didn't suppose anything like that ever happened outside of the ten-cent shockers. Wake up, man; this is the twentieth century we're living in. Don't look at me that way!"

But the wave of insane wrath was already subsiding, and Brouillard, half ashamed of the momentary lapse into savagery, was once more scowling down at the pages of his notebook, when the door opened and Quinlan, the operator, came in with a communication fresh from the Washington wire. The message was an indirect reply to Hosford's telegraphed appeal to the higher powers. Brouillard read it, stuck it upon the file, and took a roll of blueprints from the bottom drawer of his desk.

"Here are the drawings for your power installation, Mr. Hosford," he said, handing the roll to the man in the chair. And a little later he went out to smoke a pipe in the open air, leaving the message of inquiry he had intended to send unwritten.

CHAPTER VI
Symptomatic

For some few minutes the two on the cabin porch made no attempt to talk, but when the rumbling thunder of the ore-car which the elder Massingale was pushing ahead of him into the mine had died away in the subterranean distances Brouillard began again.

"I do get your point of view—sometimes," he said. "Civilization, or what stands for it, does have a way of shrinking into littleness, not to say cheapness, when one can get the proper perspective. And your life up here on Chigringo has given you the needful detached point of view."

The trouble shadows in the eyes of the young woman who was sitting in the fishnet hammock gave place to a smile of gentle derision.

"Do you call that civilization?" she demanded, indicating the straggling new town spreading itself, maplike, in the valley below.

"I suppose it is—one form of it. At least it is civilization in the making. Everything has to have some sort of a beginning."

Miss Massingale acquiesced in a little uptilt of her perfectly rounded chin.

"Just the same, you don't pretend to say you are enjoying it," she said in manifest deprecation.

"Oh, I don't know. My work is down there. A few weeks ago I was righteously hot. It seemed so crudely unnecessary to start a pigeon-plucking match at this distance from Wall street."

"But now," she queried—"now, I suppose, you have become reconciled?"

"I am growing more philosophical, let us say. There are just about so many pigeons to be plucked, anyway; they'd molt if they weren't plucked. And it may as well be done here as on the stock exchange, when you come to think of it."

"I like you least when you talk that way," said the young woman in the hammock, with open-eyed frankness. "Do you do it as other men do?—just to hear how it sounds?"

Brouillard, sitting on the top step of the porch, leaned his head against the porch post and laughed.

"You know too much—a lot too much for a person of your tender years," he asserted. "Which names one more of the charming collection of contradictions which your father or mother or somebody had the temerity to label 'Amy,' sweetest and most seraphic of diminutives."

"If you don't like my name—" she began, and then she went off at another tangent. "Please tell me why I am a 'collection of contradictions.'"

Brouillard's gaze went past the shapely little figure in the string hammock to lose itself in the far Timanyoni distances.

"You are a bundle of surprises," he said, letting the musing thought slip into speech. "What can you possibly know about my thoughts?"

She made a funny little grimace at him. "It was 'contradictions' a moment ago and now it is 'surprises.' Which reminds me, you haven't told me why I am a 'collection.'"

"Oh, I can catalogue them if you push me to it. One minute you are the Madonna lady that I can't recall, calm, reposeful, truthful, and all that, you know—so truthful that those child-like eyes of yours would make a stuttering imbecile of the man who should come to you with a lie in his mouth."

"And the next minute?"

"The next minute you are a witch, laughing at the man's little weaknesses, putting your finger on them as accurately as if you could read his soul, holding them up to your ridicule and—what's much worse—to his own. At such times your insight, or whatever you choose to call it, is enough to give a man a fit of 'seeing things.'"

Her laugh was like a schoolgirl's, light-hearted, ringing, deliciously unrestrained.

"What a picture!" she commented. And then: "I can draw a better one of you, Monsieur Victor de Brouillard."

"Do it," he dared.

"Very well, then: Once upon a time—it was a good while ago, I'm afraid—you were a very upright young man. You would cheerfully have died for a principle in those days, and you would have allowed the enemy to cut you up into cunning little inch cubes before you would have admitted that any pigeon was ever made to be plucked."

He was smiling mirthlessly, with the black mustaches taking the sardonic upcurve.

"Then what happened?"

"One of two things, or maybe both of them. You were pushed out into the life race with some sort of a handicap. I don't know what it was—or is. Is that true?"

He nodded gravely. "It is all true enough. You haven't added anything more than a graceful little touch here and there. Who has been telling you all these things about me? Not Grizzy?"

"No, not Murray Grislow; it was the man you think you know best in all the world—who is also probably the one you know the least—yourself."

"Good heavens! Am I really such a transparent egoist as all that?"

"All men are egoists," she answered calmly. "In some the ego is sound and clear-eyed and strong; in others it is weak—in the same way that passion is weak; it will sacrifice all it has or hopes to have in some sudden fury of self-assertion."

She sat up and put her hands to her hair, and he was free to look away, down upon the great ditch where the endless chain of concrete buckets added to the deep and widespread foundations of the dam. Across the river a group of hidden sawmills sang their raucous song. In the middle distance the camp-town city spread its roughly indicated streets over the valley level, the tall chimney stacks of the new cement plant were rising, and from the quarries beyond the plant the dull thunder of the blasts drifted up.

This was not Brouillard's first visit to the cabin on the Massingale claim by many. In the earliest stages of the valley activities Smith, the Buckskin cattleman, had been Amy Massingale's escort to the reclamation camp—"just a couple o' lookers," in Smith's phrase—and the unconventional altitudes had done the rest. From that day forward the young woman had hospitably opened her door to Brouillard and his assistants, and any member of the corps, from Leshington the morose, who commonly came to sit in solemn silence on the porch step, to Griffith, who had lost his youthful heart to Miss Massingale on his first visit, was welcome.

CHAPTER VII
A Turn in the Trail

For Brouillard it had seemed the most natural thing in the world to fall under the spell of enchantment. He knew next to nothing of the young woman's life story; he had not cared to know. It had not occurred to him to wonder how the daughter of a man who drilled and shot the holes in his own mine should have the gifts and belongings—when she chose to display them—of a woman of a much wider world. It was enough for him that she was piquantly attractive in any character and that he found her marvelously stimulating and uplifting. On the days when the devil of moroseness and irritability possessed and maddened him he could climb to the cabin on high Chigringo and find sanity. It was a keen joy to be with her, and up to the present this had sufficed.

"Egoism is merely another name for the expression of a vital need," he said after the divagating pause, defining the word more for his own satisfaction than in self-defense.

"You may put it in that way if you please," she returned gravely. "What is your need?"

He stated it concisely. "Money—a lot of it."

"How singular!" she laughed. She got out of the hammock and came to lean, with her hands behind her, against the opposite porch post. "But tell me, what would you do with your pot of rainbow gold—if you should find it?"

Brouillard rose and straightened himself with his arms over his head like an athlete testing his muscles for the record-breaking event.

"What would I do? A number of things. But first of all, I think, I'd buy the privilege of telling some woman that I love her."

She was silent for so long a time that he looked at his watch and thought of going. But at the deciding instant she held him with a low-spoken question.

"Does it date back to the handicap? You needn't tell me if you don't want to."

"It does. And there is no reason why I shouldn't tell you the simple fact. When my father died he left me a debt—a debt of honor; and it must be paid. Until it is paid—but I am sure you understand."

"Quite fully," she responded quickly, and now there was no trace of levity in the sweetly serious tone. "Is it much?—so much that you can't—"

He nodded and sat down again on the porch step. "Yes, it is big enough to go in a class by itself—in round numbers, a hundred thousand dollars."

"Horrors!" she gasped. "And you are carrying that millstone? Must you carry it?"

"If you knew the circumstances you would be the first to say that I must carry it, and go on carrying it to the end of the chapter."

"But—but you'll never be free!"

"Not on a government salary," he admitted. "As a matter of fact, it takes more than half of the salary to pay the premiums on—pshaw! Let's drop it."

She was looking beyond him and her voice was quick with womanly sympathy when she said: "If you could drop

"But Tell Me, What Would You Do With Your Pot of Rainbow Gold?"

it—but you can't. And it changes everything for you, distorts everything, colors your entire life. It's heart-breaking!"

This was dangerous ground for him and he knew it. In the ardor of young manhood he had taken up the vicarious burden dutifully, and at that time his renunciation of the things that other men strove for seemed the lightest of the many fetterings. But now love for a woman was threatening to make the renunciation too grievous to be borne.

"How did you know?" he queried curiously. "It does change things. I'd sell anything I've got, save one, for a chance at the freedom that other men have—and don't value."

"What is the one thing you wouldn't sell?" she questioned, and Brouillard chose to discover a gently quickened interest in the clear-seeing eyes.

"My love for the—for some woman. I'm saving that, you know. It is the only capital I'll have when the big debt is paid."

"Do you want me to be frivolous or serious?" she asked, looking down at him with the grimacing little smile that always reminded him of a caress. "I have been wondering whether she is or isn't worth the effort—and the reservation you make. Because it is all in that, you know. You can do and be what you want to do and be if you only want to hard enough."

He was looking down, chiefly because he dared not look up, when he answered soberly: "She is worth it many times over; her price is above rubies. Money, much or little, wouldn't be in it."

"That is better—much better. Now we may go on to the ways and means; they are all in the man, not in the things, 'not none whatsoever,' as Tig would say. Let me show you what I mean. Three times within my recollection my father has been worth considerably more than you owe, and three times he has—well, it's gone. And now he is going to make good again when the railroad comes."

Brouillard got up.

"I must be going back down the hill," he said. And then, without warning: "What if I should tell you that the railroad is not coming to the Niquola, Amy?"

Do you think that Amy will conduct a little flirtation with the despised Hosford, in order to aid her father, if she finds out that Hosford can bring the railroad to Niquola or keep it away?

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Beautiful Homes of Manila

THE LARGE MIDDLE SALA

MANILA is a city of beautiful homes and extremely picturesque surroundings, the colorful Orient blended with the practical convenience of the Occident, according to a writer in the New York Sun.

In the early days, from 1900 to 1903, there was great difficulty in finding suitable homes for civilians and quarters for officers of the army. At present in and about the city there are many attractive dwellings, rearranged Spanish houses and thoroughly up-to-date bungalows. Possibly one might criticize the intimate way in which some of the pretty concrete bungalows are huddled, two or three together, on a plot of land which, in Singapore or Colombo, would be considered inadequate for the grounds of one home. Inside, however, the tiny house is luminously fresh and clean. If you are an American, the condensed convenience of it all may compensate to a degree for the restricted lawn. It is the spirit of practicality moved straight over to the Philippines from the United States, which builds two houses where one should be.

Comparatively few Americans have built homes of their own. Mostly they have lived in the old Spanish houses, which are exceedingly commodious and picturesque, but often rather primitive as regards sanitary arrangements. They are solidly constructed to keep out the heat of the sun and also the typhoons.

The sliding windows with their many small panes of opalescent oyster shell can enclose the house completely against ravaging wind and rain. There is invariably a stone paved courtyard where, before the days of automobiles, the carriages were kept. The family occupied the upper story, while the servants' quarters were on the ground floor. These were never more than two stories because of possible earthquakes. As a rule, the stable was underneath, or near the kitchen, and the horses were brought around from the back and harnessed to the carriage in the front courtyard.

The iron barred windows of Spanish times are seen always in Manila, even in the modern bungalows. They afford excellent protection against ma rauders, both animal and human.

Typical High Class Dwelling.

The inner entrance, paved with blocks of stone, leads by the tiled steps and hallway on the ground floor. Beyond are the servants' quarters and kitchen. To the left before entering the dining room is the room of the No. 1 boy or major-domo, who superintends the household and must be always on hand. In a typical dwelling of the better class the comidor, or dining room, has a tiled floor, barred windows and furniture of the beautiful native hard wood, narra, which resembles mahogany. The table, which seats twelve persons, is of one piece of narra.

The walls of the stairway are decorated with very old temple hangings and Moro scarfs, intricately woven by hand and vividly colored. Frequently the stairway leads directly into the large middle sala, which is a combination of hall and drawing room. Walls and ceiling are covered with cloth which is painted or frescoed. In the sala illustrated the frescoing is in soft pink.

The chairs, of woven sea grass and bamboo, are painted white and upholstered in pink flowered chintz. Odd-shaped pieces of blackwood and narra furniture are all about, and ancient and curious embroideries, prints and brasses adorn walls and tables. All the rooms are wonderfully ample and airy. Floors, doors, blinds and all woodwork finishings are of exquisite native timber.

The large black sala, in cool blue, opens on a veranda which faces the sea. Here one has a superb view of outgoing and incoming ships in the natural harbor, guarded on either side by mountainous Mariveles and Corregidor. Around the rooms, which are on the weather side of the house, runs a galeria, or small corridor, perhaps four feet wide. In time of severest typhoons it can be entirely enclosed so as to shelter the rooms in case the sliding windows are not sufficient protection.

Natives and many Americans sleep on the Filipino beds. They are of narra, four posted and often extravagantly and beautifully carved. The canopy over the top holds the necessary mosquito curtain. There is a border of the wood about four inches wide and the rest of the bed is precisely like a cane seated chair. Over this the native spreads a straw mat or "petate" and a sheet. The American makes a concession to temperate zone comfort by having a mattress to fit over the woven cane.

There are no cupboards in the Spanish houses nor indeed in the newer dwellings of American designing. Because of the intense humidity during the rainy season built-in closets would not be advisable. Wardrobes of native camegon or narra wood and ornamented with delicate carving contain one's clothing.

The Filipino as a servant is generally a success. Well and carefully trained he is a joy. "He" it invariably is, for only muchachos or boys are employed for household duties. In age he may range from sixteen to sixty, but he is always called "boy."

Families who have lived in the Philippines for several years insist upon the native costume for their servants. The muchachos of the old time English and Spanish families wore always the costume of their country. It consists of loose white duck or drill trousers and an upper garment of white called a "camisa China" like a laundered shirt with stiff bosom and turned down collar. It is worn, however, loosely outside of the trousers. Chinelas, soft heelless slippers, may complete the outfit, but it is the accepted custom for the boys to go about the house barefooted. It has been observed that if muchachos are allowed to dress in American fashion they are apt to step over and beyond the limits of their calling.

Heat Is Not Distressing.

Manila is not so distressingly warm as is sometimes supposed. Although tropical in climate, the heat never reaches the fierce height of summers in New York and Chicago. There is a fresh breeze from the sea in the hottest season, April, May and June. Even at that time Manila is not as enervating or humidly hot as Singapore or Colombo.

There has been much to correct in a sanitary and hygienic way. Naturally in the fight for cleanliness, some of the picturesque bits of the medieval town have been sacrificed.

Still, even with its modern hotels and clubs, trolleys and automobiles, at each turn one comes into contact with some oriental bit of local color. At one moment you pass a marvelous old church full of quaintly delicate wood carvings, centuries old. The mosquelike dome of the archbishop's palace gleams white through the palms as one strolls along the Malecon drive. Through the streets follow each other in a vivid, variegated flood of iridescent color, blue and purple clothed China folk, gayly kimonoed Japanese, turbaned Sikhs, American sailors and soldiers, white robed Jesuit priests and brown garbed Capuchin monks, and Filipino women in the brilliant plaid skirts and rainbow hued camisas of their native costume.

Nowhere in the world is there a promenade more distinctive and picturesque than the Luneta of Manila. Here at five in the afternoon juvenile Manila assembles with its nurses and amahs, to romp on the velvety greensward and revel in the fresh breezes from the bay. At six the concert begins and the flood of carriages and automobiles revolves slowly around the Luneta.

Night falls swiftly in the tropics. At seven the concert comes to a finish, and at the opening notes of "The Star Spangled Banner" white uniformed army officers descend from their carriages and stand at attention, and civilians, private soldiers and sailors, and the immense and motley crowd of Filipinos listen respectfully, hat in hand, till the last strains are ended. Then the lamps on the automobiles and carriages flicker into light like thousands of huge fireflies and all Manila banters away in the luminous dark blue beauty of the blossom-scented tropic night to dine.